

insurance access. Nonpartisan experts estimate 13 million fewer Americans will be insured because of the Republican repeal, including millions of children.

Yesterday I met with families from the Little Lobbyists. I was struck by Laura Hatcher's story of her child and her emotion when she learned about the passage of the Affordable Care Act. She burst into tears. She knew her son, who has cerebral palsy, could gain insurance with no fear of discrimination due to preexisting conditions.

Ms. Hatcher urged yesterday that America must turn from its destructive and immoral path. She said: We are here to show what access to affordable, quality healthcare and programs like Medicaid mean for our families. These programs that the Republican Congress intends to cut to fund tax breaks to wealthy heirs and corporations are the difference between our children having a future or being forced back into institutions reminiscent of a Dickens novel. This is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress were elected to protect and defend the American people, not put families like the Hatchers at risk because of the Republican's billionaire tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD Laura Hatcher's remarks:

#### LAURA HATCHER REMARKS

Thank you Leader Pelosi for inviting the Little Lobbyists here today to speak on behalf of families of children with complex medical needs.

It's the holidays and the Muppet version of "A Christmas Carol" has been on repeat at my house. We're all big Muppet fans and my 11-year-old son Simon loves music, silliness, and a sweet story. I also think another reason Simon likes the movie so much is because he identifies with the character "Tiny Tim." It's easy to see the resemblance. Like Tim, Simon is sweet and kind, he loves Christmas, he even sits by the fireplace and sings sometimes.

Dickens doesn't identify Tiny Tim's diagnosis, but I imagine he might have had cerebral palsy like Simon. Simon has trouble walking and like Tim, he wears braces to support his legs. Though I miss him being little enough to carry on my shoulders the way Bob Cratchit carries Tiny Tim, Simon still loves to be held and hugged. And I do hug him all the time, as often as I can. Because, like the Cratchits, due to another rare disease we don't yet understand, we Hatchers don't know how long we'll have Simon with us.

I also find it's strikingly easy to draw another analogy between "A Christmas Carol" (Muppet version included), and what's happening in our lives right now. In the story, the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is warned that his decisions have far-reaching consequences that impact many people. The same can be said of the decisions being made by Congress today. The choices they're making, like whether or not to pass this tax bill, have far reaching consequences for us all.

It is for this reason my family has been coming to Capitol Hill with the Little Lobbyists since July. Our government seemed to turn away from protecting people with disabilities and complex medical needs, like my little boy, and began trying to take away the legal protections and programs my son's life and my family's future depend on. Lately it seems like everything is under threat—accessibility, education, and health care.

It was less than 10 years ago that the passage of the Affordable Care Act made sure that people with preexisting conditions, like my Simon, would always have the right to health care. It promised families like mine could not be cut off by insurers and forced into bankruptcy because our child's health care was just too expensive. It expanded Medicaid, including waiver programs, so more kids like Simon can have access to the therapy, health care, and inclusion programs they need to survive and thrive in their communities.

I remember the exact moment it passed—I was in the grocery store and I burst into tears of relief when my husband texted me with the news. After years of worrying every single day about how we'd be able to care for our sweet boy in the future, it finally seemed like things were going to be okay. Living with that knowledge has been a huge gift for a family like ours, who routinely deal with life and death situations most families can't imagine.

But since this summer there have been multiple attempts to repeal the ACA, including as a part of this Tax Bill. Non-partisan experts have told us that 13 million people will lose access to health insurance if it passes. Once the ACA is weakened, protection for people with pre-existing conditions will become too costly to afford.

Very soon, I could once again be facing a future where I don't know how I'll be able to care for my child. This is a thought I simply find too difficult to bear.

And all of this is happening against the advice of experts. Without the input of those it will impact. It makes one wonder who our government is listening to, if not us. According to lobbying disclosure forms, this tax bill was written with the input of over 6,000 (real, not little) lobbyists. Some representatives have even said publicly that their donors have told them to "get it done, or else."

Or else. We parents of medically complex kids understand consequences. We know what will happen if this tax bill passes, if our country does not turn from this destructive and immoral path.

And so, here we are. We are the ghosts of "Christmas present." We are here to show legislators what access to affordable, quality health care and programs like Medicaid mean for our families. These programs, that Congress intends to cut to fund tax breaks to wealthy heirs and corporations, are literally the difference between our children having a future in their homes and communities, or being forced back into institutions reminiscent of a Dickens' novel. This is wrong.

We're also here to show everyone that kids with complex medical needs and disabilities are just kids. They love to play, they love to learn, they love the Muppets. And as Americans they deserve to have a government that protects them. Today, as a mother and as a voice of conscience, I'm asking everyone that can hear me that can see these children—please protect them. Help us make sure that Christmases yet to come are even more joyful than those past.

God bless us, everyone.

#### THE INFAMOUS TRUMP TOWER MEETING

(Mr. HUFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, June 9, 2016, was the date of the infamous Trump Tower meeting with at least five Russians with Kremlin ties. That date is about the only constant in a

tangled web of lies we have heard from Team Trump.

When Donald Trump, Jr., was first asked about this meeting, he said it was just about adoption, not a campaign issue. But he changed his tune when the New York Times revealed emails showing it was all about the campaign; in fact, an offer to get damning information on Hillary Clinton as "part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump. . . ."

Now, Donald Trump, Jr.'s, response to this illegal offer says it all: ". . . if it is what you say, I love it. . . ."

We may never know how much collusion was set in motion at this meeting, but we do know two things:

First, Team Trump has repeatedly misled us, concealing it from security clearance forms, issuing a false statement dictated by President Trump himself.

Second, the Russians did go on to produce a massive cache of stolen emails and helped the Trump campaign in other ways.

These are damning facts, Mr. Speaker, and there are many more to come. We need to find out what else they lied about and what else they are hiding.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

#### CONGRATULATING AMSTERDAM RADIO LEGEND SAM ZURLO ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Amsterdam radio legend, Sam Zurlo, on his retirement this week.

For over 60 years, Sam's voice has greeted the residents and visitors of Montgomery County, New York. Sam has been working in broadcasting since 1953. Now at 82, he hosts the longest-running talk show in the history of the county.

Sam's broadcasting career was born from his service with Armed Forces Radio in Germany, where he delivered a nightly broadcast for 3 years. Sam also worked as a print journalist for the Schenectady Gazette for some 35 years.

Decade after decade, his distinctive voice has been the catalyst for free and open debate. He has brought an air of familiarity and of community to our humble corner of upstate New York. Listening to conversations about current events with Sam has always made the abstractions of politics a little more real. Sam's personality has inspired many and brought light, comfort, and connection to countless neighbors and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Sam Zurlo for his years of exceptional work and a legendary career in local journalism. I wish him the best for an equally special retirement.